Approved For Release 2004/12/02 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000600070017-7

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

Attached memo to Kissinger dated 14 July 70 and ending with page 18

15 July 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: Dr. Henry A. Kissinger
Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs

SUBJECT : Analysis of the Indochina Situation and Action Courses that might Influence Hanoi's Behavior

1. In connection with Ambassador Bruce's appointment as senior negotiator in Paris, we have taken the occasion to review where we stand vis-a-vis Vietnam and the rest of Indochina. As a part of this review, one of my associates pulled together the attached paper, which analyzes the background factors that create the context within which actions in Indochina are conducted and sketches the outline of two alternate courses of U.S. action believed capable of influencing Hanoi's behavior, labeled Scenario A and Scenario B. The two scenarios are based on two different hypotheses or assumptions concerning the priority ranking of U.S. objectives. Scenario A assumes that the primary objective is U.S. disengagement from the Indochina struggle in a compressed time frame. Scenario B assumes that our primary objectives are those that relate to the political dynamics of South Vietnam (and Indochina as a whole) after the struggle ends and that time factors, though important, are secondary considerations.

2. My associate's memorandum, which touches on matters beyond the jurisdiction and responsibilities of this Agency, was written as a document for my personal consideration and background use. I found it enlightening and provocative and am therefore sending this copy informally to you in the belief that you will find it interesting and may perhaps find it helpful.

Rewrite of 4 July 1970 memo to Director.

Richard Helms
Director

Attachment
GAC:jal

Distribution:
Orig - Addressee w/att
1 - GAC Chrono w/att
1 - [redacted] w/att 25X1
1 - C/FE w/att
1 - DCI Spec Proj w/att
1 - Memos TO and FROM DCI w/att 25X1

Approved For Release 2004/12/02 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000600070017-7

SECRET/[redacted]
Approved For Release 2004/12/02 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000600070017-7

25X1

4 July 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Possible U.S. Courses of Action in Indochina

1. Attached is a memorandum I have been working on, tinkering with, brooding over, and consulting colleagues about for the past three weeks. I offer it for your consideration and any use you want to make of it.

2. As you will note, the memo concludes with what I call an "organizational coda," offering some free thoughts on how the U.S. Government might better organize itself to handle its business more efficiently and effectively during the weeks immediately ahead. Regardless of what course events in Indochina take and regardless of what the U.S. opts to do, these forthcoming weeks (i.e. the period from now through November) will be complex, tricky, and crucial. I have deliberately structured the attached memo's format so you can detach or discard this final section, which gets into rather delicate questions you might not want to raise even if you should want to give the rest of the paper to a limited readership.

[redacted]

25X1

George A. Carver, Jr.
Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

Attachment

GAC:jes

Distribution:
Orig. - Addressee w/att (Memo returned & filed GAC Chrono)
1 - DCI Special Projects w/att
1 - Memos TO and FROM DCI w/att

File w/ memo

Approved For Release 2004/12/02 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000600070017-7
SECRET/[redacted]

25X1

SECRET
Approved For Release 2004/12/02 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000600070017-7

25X1

4 July 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Possible U.S. Courses of Action in Indochina

1. The Need for Perspective. Washington now abounds with documents of varying degrees of formality and bureaucratic status dealing with the Indochina situation or various facets thereof, action courses the U.S. might or could (or, in the opinion of some of these documents' authors, should) pursue, probable reactions of the North Vietnamese, the Soviets, the Chinese or all three to some of these possible or recommended action courses, etc., etc. Many of these documents reflect a great deal of hard work by their authors; many contain sound analysis and excellent ideas. Collectively and individually, however, most of them suffer from a want of perspective They consist of piecemeal approaches to disjunct components of what is really a composite problem or set of inter-related problems. Even the good and perceptive prose flowing around town today on Indochina is largely text without context, which makes it very difficult to assess or evaluate in a truly meaningful manner. Thus before offering yet another set of action proposals for consideration, we want first to address the basic frame of reference within which all such recommendations ought to be weighed.

2. The Principal Protagonists and their Basic Objectives. We need not tarry with the truism that the Indochina struggle is a complex one involving many individual or politically corporate participants. From our angle of vision, there are clearly two principal protagonists:*

(a) The leadership of the Vietnamese Communist (Lao Dong) Party, which now sits in Hanoi and exercises complete, internationally acknowledged and (at least tacitly) sanctioned control over the government of what we -- but not they -- call "North Vietnam."

(b) The U.S. Government

* The struggle would of course be seen in different perspective from Saigon's angle of vision, or Vientiane's or Phnom Penh's or Bangkok's.

Approved For Release 2004/12/02 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000600070017-7
SECRET

25X1

Approved For Release 2004/12/02 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000600070017-7

3. The Lao Dong Party's basic objectives are:

(a) Acquisition of political control over all of Vietnam -- hence toppling the present Saigon Government, engineering its replacement by a party-controlled regime and, in a fairly short time span (measured in months rather than years), "reunifying" Vietnam under one, overtly single political structure controlled by the Lao Dong.

(b) Establishment of hegemony or suzerainty over Laos and Cambodia, preferably through engineering in each country the creation of a government in which the predominant voice would be that of an ostensibly indigenous "leftist" or "neutralist" party that would actually be a controlled, disciplined satellite of the Lao Dong.

4. Formulation of U.S. objectives is not this Agency's prerogative or proper function. One of the basic problems involved, however, is that our objectives are considerably more diffuse and less concrete than those of our principal adversaries. (This fact makes them harder to get across to a domestic or international audience and makes progress toward their achievement, or lack thereof, considerably harder to measure.) From the reasonably consistent activity patterns and top level statements of the U.S. Government under, now, four different presidents (two Republican, two Democrat), it can be inferred that among our basic objectives are the following:

(a) Reasonable stability (at least partially defined in operational terms by the absence of serious armed conflict) in all of what we (not the Vietnamese Communists) view as the four states that comprise the political residue of French Indochina.

(b) The evolution in South Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos of tolerably viable governments whose writs run with sufficient force and effectiveness to produce some approximation of the area wide stability outlined above and which, in each case, reflect some reasonably accurate approximation of the internal balance of political forces within those three countries.

Approved For Release 2004/12/02 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000600070017-7

Approved For Release 2004/12/02 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000600070017-7

(c) Preventing or thwarting Hanoi's now thirteen year old effort to dictate the structure and composition of South Vietnam's government by force of arms -- controlled, supported and directed from Hanoi.

(d) We also clearly have at least one other objective much harder to phrase with accuracy and proper balance. It involves sharply curtailing the expenditure of U.S. effort and direct involvement in the Indochina struggle but without thereby rendering impossible the achievement of (a), (b) or (c) above -- especially (c) -- or occasioning a short term evolution of events whose net consequences could generally be read as a U.S. defeat and generate world-wide doubts about U.S. constancy or the efficacy of U.S. support.

5. Givens in the Equation. The above analysis (if accepted as valid) plus the record of actual events in Indochina over the past fifteen years suggest certain considerations that ought to be frankly acknowledged as "givens" in the Indochinese political equation and construed as collectively framing the context within which specific action recommendations should be weighed.

(a) The Lao Dong Party (or "Hanoi") is not going to abandon or forswear its objectives. It has never done so over the past four decades, even in periods of direst adversity, and is most unlikely to do so in the future so long as the Party continues to exist as presently constituted.

(b) Our troubles derive not so much from Hanoi's objectives per se as from the strategy through which the Politburo has opted to pursue their achievement over the past fifteen odd years: terror and subversion increasingly backed, augmented -- and now, almost supplanted -- by overt armed force, i.e., the North Vietnamese Army.

Approved For Release 2004/12/02 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000600070017-7

Approved For Release 2004/12/02 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000600070017-7

(c) U.S. interests and the achievement of U.S. objectives do not really require that Hanoi abandon its ambitions, objectives or goals. Our objectives are unlikely to be achieved, however, unless or until Hanoi can be induced to change the basic strategy through which it is pursuing its ambitions.

(d) Negotiations, of themselves, are highly unlikely to induce the type of change necessary for the achievement of our objectives. Hanoi is interested in success -- not settlement as an end in itself. The Lao Dong Politburo has no intrinsic aversion whatsoever to violence or strife. Nor do negotiations have intrinsic merit in Hanoi's eyes. Like assassinations, propaganda, ambushes or frontal military assaults, negotiations are simply another tactical device, sometimes ill-advised, sometimes useful -- particularly when a respite is needed or an opponent can be placed under constraints to be "forthcoming."

(e) Agreements deriving from negotiations, of whatever form, are also viewed by Hanoi as tactical devices. Such agreements, however formally solemnized, have never been and almost certainly never will be allowed, of themselves, to constrain the Poliburo's subsequent action choices. If the record of the past fifteen years does not make this abundantly clear, then history is indeed irrelevant.

(f) Hanoi is not likely to alter its basic strategy of armed struggle unless and until it becomes convinced that the costs involved in adhering to this strategy are almost certain to outweigh the benefits to be derived therefrom.

(g) In pursuing its current strategy, Hanoi never has looked and never will look on activities in various parts of Indochina (e.g., in South Vietnam, in Laos or in Cambodia) as separate or unrelated. Hanoi's intent is to develop an integrated mix of military and political

Approved For Release 2004/12/02 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000600070017-7

Approved For Release 2004/12/02 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000600070017-7

activities throughout Indochina that will be complementary and will reciprocally support pursuit of Hanoi's overall political objectives. Thus, in Hanoi's eyes, military campaigns in North Laos or in Cambodia are not separate from the effort to acquire control over South Vietnam but integral components of the same common struggle.

6. Variables and Constants. Over the past two years and particularly in recent months, Hanoi has confronted an increasing number of problems. These have included a continuing drain of manpower accompanied by little tactical success on South Vietnam battlefields; a progressive decline in the percentage of the South Vietnamese population under Communist control and a concomitant overall strengthening and consolidation of the GVN's position in the countryside; a Vietnamization program and complementary curtailment of U.S. troop strength which has proceeded without adverse impact on allied fortunes and, hence, works to Hanoi's political and military disadvantage; a stalling of the Communists' initially successful 1969 offensive in North Laos, which has made no progress since early March; unanticipated political developments in Cambodia which replaced a benevolently neutral Sihanouk with a government actively hostile to Hanoi; loss of the use of the port of Sihanoukville; loss of the sanctuary status of Hanoi's Cambodian bases; loss of a significant, and mounting percentage of its strategic stockpiles in those bases, an ARVN whose performance record on current Cambodian operations and whose degree of improvement thereby demonstrated, Hanoi must find quite disquieting; a U.S. negotiating posture in Paris much firmer than Hanoi estimated would be the case in late 1968 and early 1969, and a U.S. government manifestly less constrained by domestic political pressures than Hanoi had calculated. Despite such problems (some of which -- e.g., Cambodian developments -- Hanoi sees as offering potential benefits as well as difficulties), Hanoi shows no sign of altering its basic strategy.

7. The evidence currently available strongly suggests that after a thorough bidding review, Hanoi has opted to pursue a very hard line, militarily and politically, in the months ahead. North Vietnam apparently intends to pressure the Phnom Penh government by mounting military harassment throughout Cambodia, to develop a new redoubt area in Northeast Cambodia, to expand Communist control in South Laos and to attempt to develop new military pressures in at least the

Approved For Release 2004/12/02 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000600070017-7

Approved For Release 2004/12/02 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000600070017-7

northern part of South Vietnam. There is probably a good measure of bluff and bravado in this stance; for Hanoi clearly does not want to acknowledge by its behavior that it may have been damaged or had its capabilities crimped by recent developments, particularly developments and current operations in Cambodia. Despite, or because of, problems with which it may see itself presently confronted, Hanoi wants to give no outward sign of playing from anything but strength. Furthermore, one of the basic calculations shaping Hanoi's policy decisions is that whatever might be the unfavorable long term impact of certain current trends and developments, Hanoi has more political staying power than does the U.S. Hanoi is well aware that the decibel count of opposition to the war within the United States, which had been declining since President Nixon's 3 November 1969 speech, is now rising sharply in the wake of Cambodia. Hanoi probably also calculates that the best way to fan such opposition and build domestic political pressure on the U.S. government is for Hanoi to adopt a hard stance and, by its actions, convey the impression that it has not been hurt and is prepared to fight on forever until its goals are achieved.

8. Hanoi's approach to negotiations, as exemplified by its behavior at Paris, has always been hard nosed and shows no signs of becoming more flexible in the near future. Indeed, as outlined above, such signs as are available point in the opposite direction. Hanoi is not likely to talk seriously at Paris until we show a willingness to take up the things it is seriously interested in talking about: slicing up the pie of political power in South Vietnam and the unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. troops on a fixed, reasonably compressed timetable. By slicing up the pie of power, Hanoi does not mean having the Communist Party take its chances in a reasonably open political competition, whether or not marked by elections. Hanoi tried that course in the 1954-1956 period, when the odds favoring Communist success were very much greater than they are today. The Lao Dong Party lost that apparently sure fire gamble and, as a result, felt itself compelled to resume the armed struggle on which it is still engaged. Thus Hanoi is not interested in trying that gamble again against odds that are clearly worse than those existing sixteen years ago. Hanoi wants the present GVN scuttled and a new structure created in which the Communists are guaranteed a significant share of power, guaranteed security and status for their followers, and guaranteed a clear shot at the total control for which they have quested so long. When or if we show ourselves willing to talk in these terms, Hanoi will become interested in serious negotiations. Until then, or until circumstances change appreciably, Hanoi will stonewall as it has stonewalled since the Paris talks first opened in May 1968.

Approved For Release 2004/12/02 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000600070017-7

Approved For Release 2004/12/02 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000600070017-7

9. The policy decisions deriving from Hanoi's present mood and calculations bring into sharp focus what Hanoi would, and does, call a "contradiction" latent in the U.S. position. Hanoi considers the "contradiction" a major U.S. vulnerability, a vulnerability on which Hanoi believes its politico-military strategy can profitably concentrate. The U.S. has certain objectives which relate to the political structures and situations we would like to see in South Vietnam -- and, for that matter, Laos and Cambodia as well -- after the struggle ends. These might be collectively termed our substantive objectives. The U.S. also has what might be termed temporal objectives, i.e., the goal of ending the struggle, or at least direct American participation therein, within a fairly short time frame. This time frame is not fixed or precisely demarcated, but its general outlines are formed by the policies and commitments already openly enunciated by the U.S. Government and by the process of diminishing U.S. resources in the area that commenced with the June 1969 Midway announcement of the first incremental withdrawal of U.S. troops. Our problem -- and what Hanoi sees as its opportunity -- derives from the fact that these substantive and temporal objectives are not entirely compatible.

10. Despite its public pose of "on to victory, forever if necessary," Hanoi almost certainly does not want to fight an indefinitely protracted war and probably could not do so. Hanoi clearly calculates, however, that despite current problems and difficulties, it has the resources, resiliency and staying power necessary to carry on the struggle through any time frame politically acceptable to the U.S. Government. These calculations of Hanoi's, and the objective factors on which they are at least partially based, pose a dilemma for those tasked with recommending U.S. courses of action that stand some reasonable chance of influencing Hanoi's behavior in ways that further U.S. interests.

11. Events of the past sixteen years -- and, for that matter, the past sixteen weeks -- make it obvious that in Indochina the situation often does not evolve the way it logically ought to evolve and that unexpected developments can throw even the best of calculations awry. Having acknowledged this, however, the fact remains that there is no scenario of U.S. actions which has an arguably good chance of inducing Hanoi to abandon armed struggle within the reasonably near future and without involving the sacrifice of any of our non-time linked substantive objectives. Thus there is no single "optimum scenario" that can be offered. Instead, the development of a recommended scenario (in terms of actions most likely to induce certain behavioral responses in Hanoi) depends on which U.S. objectives are determined by higher authority to be the constants and which the variables. The remainder of this paper therefore sketches the outlines of two alternate scenarios. One is premised on the hypothesis that time is the constant and our "substantive residue" objectives the variables, though we would obviously like to achieve as many of them as possible. The other is premised on the hypothesis that our substantive objectives are the constants and time the variable, though we obviously want to minimize the amount of time involved.

Approved For Release 2004/12/02 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000600070017-7

Approved For Release 2004/12/02 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000600070017-7

SCENARIO A -- TIME THE CONSTANT

12. If we assume that our primary objective -- the constant -- is to complete a total (or virtually total) U.S. disengagement from Indochina in a finite, compressed time frame (measured in months), the following mix and sequence of actions probably stands the best chance of inducing cooperatively responsive behavior on Hanoi's part.

a. The Technique. Given the current situation in Indochina and balance of forces therein, plus Hanoi's present mind set, negotiation is the only technique that has any reasonable chance of producing an early settlement of the war that would permit the degree of U.S. disengagement outlined above. Pressure, or a "pressure plus" mix of the type described in Scenario B, might work over time, but if a short time span is assumed as the given "constant," negotiation is the technique around which our action package must be constructed.

b. The Price. Negotiation, almost by definition, involves compromise. Theorectically, when a problem, situation or conflict is resolved by negotiation, all parties involved have to shave their maximum demands and, in effect, take less than they would like to get -- or pay more than they would like to pay -- in order to achieve a negotiated solution. In concrete cases, however, where one party is under some constraint the other does not feel -- e.g., time pressure -- and especially if one party is known to be under such a constraint, the constrained party almost invariably has to make the greater compromise *

* Consider who has to compromise most in, say, negotiations on the sale/purchase of a home where there is a wide spread between what the seller wants to get and the prospective buyer wants to pay when (a) the seller is on the verge of being transferred while the buyer is perfectly prepared to rent for another year or two, as opposed to a situation (b) in which the seller is in no rush, houses are scarce, and the buyer, recently arrived in town, has a large family cramped in a small, expensive motel room, his wife is irate, and the school year is about to start.

Approved For Release 2004/12/02 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000600070017-7

Approved For Release 2004/12/02 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000600070017-7

Since Hanoi is more interested in success than settlement per se and feels itself able to carry on the struggle in its present form beyond any time frame politically feasible for the United States, we will have to pay a price to get serious negotiations started in the near future, and a further price for an early settlement.

(1) The two things Hanoi wants to talk about -- and the only things it has shown any interest in talking about -- are division of political power in Vietnam and the total withdrawal of U.S. forces in a specified time frame. The minimum price we would have to pay to get serious negotiations in train, therefore, would almost certainly be an expressed willingness to discuss both of these topics, in private, with Hanoi's designated representatives. We would also probably have to be willing to hold private discussions about the future political shape of South Vietnam not just (or even) with persons overtly representing Hanoi but with ones ostensibly representing the NLF/PRG -- and to do so without GVN representatives present. Hanoi simply will not participate in serious negotiations if we try to adhere in private to President Nixon's public stance that the position of the GVN is "not-negotiable."

(2) The price we would have to pay for a settlement is something that would obviously have to be explored in negotiations. Given present circumstances and Hanoi's current attitudes, the minimum price for an early negotiated settlement would almost certainly include (a) a public U.S. commitment to total U.S. withdrawal by a specific date, regardless of what happens politically in South Vietnam, Laos or Cambodia and (b) U.S. acquiescence in some form of South Vietnamese plebiscite or national election structured and supervised by a "mixed" Vietnamese body in which the GVN -- if it participated at all -- would be but one faction with (at best) a voice and vote no greater than that of each of several other factions including (separately) the PRG and additional Communist-dominated entities such as the "Alliance of National, Democratic and Peace Forces." Another part of this minimum package would almost certainly be the scrapping (or ignoring) of South Vietnam's present constitution.

Approved For Release 2004/12/02 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000600070017-7

Approved For Release 2004/12/02 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000600070017-7

in the above scenario as an admission of U.S. political weakness or, at least, an acknowledgement of the rising political force of domestic opposition to the war within the United States. Furthermore, soon after initial expressions of U.S. interest in serious talks, Hanoi will probably move sharply in an attempt to score politically useful victories on the battlefield. Thus, even though our objective (under this scenario) is an early negotiated settlement, we should maintain throughout Indochina military pressure of a nature and extent sufficient to prevent any near-term evolution of events that could be read as signs that the overall Indochina situation was moving rapidly in Hanoi's favor.

(1) In Laos, the North Vietnamese are already checked around the Plaine des Jarres in the North and are not likely to achieve (or essay) any major moves there until the current rainy season ends. South Laos is soft but under this scenario it can be more or less ignored because within the time frame here envisaged, further Communist gains in South Laos are not likely to be too politically damaging, though it would obviously be embarrassing if the Communists should capture Pakse.

(2) The present level of allied activity should probably suffice in South Vietnam, where the Communists do not have the present capacity to secure major gains on the battlefield in the near future.

(3) The tricky problem is Cambodia, primarily because the U.S. negotiating position would be materially weakened if the Phnom Penh government collapsed under Communist harassing pressure while the diplomatic moves outlined above were in train. Under this Scenario A, the U.S. should endeavor not to expand its public involvement in or identification with the Lon Nol government's fortunes, but should encourage the South Vietnamese (and perhaps the Thais) to lend Lon Nol enough assistance to keep his head above water. For our interests to be served, it would be necessary for him to stay above water during the time it takes us to negotiate our deal with Hanoi. We should probably avoid appointing an Ambassador to Phnom Penh

Approved For Release 2004/12/02 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000600070017-7

Approved For Release 2004/12/02 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000600070017-7

or making any other public gestures of support, and we should certainly avoid any further U.S. ground force involvement in Cambodian combat. We should, however, provide enough air support (masked as interdiction of Communist supply movements) to keep the FANK from suffering major tactical reverses that could have unfortunate near term political consequences.

(4) Overallinterdiction of North Vietnamese supply routes through Laos and northern Cambodia should continue at about present levels. All of our military activity, however, should be keyed to keeping the overall situation from getting visibly worse in the near future, and nothing more.

f. Cease Fire and Restraint. Once serious private talks are in train with Hanoi's representatives in Paris, and/or their PRG surrogates, the feasibility and mechanics of a cease fire would probably be one of the most profitable concrete questions to explore. A unilateral U.S. call for a cease fire, however, would probably be read by Hanoi and all others in Indochina as a U.S. admission of political weakness, particularly if such a call were made before serious private negotiations were well in train. Such a premature call would almost certainly harden Hanoi's already tough negotiating stance and would probably have precipitously adverse effects on the overt allied political posture. If this proved to be the case, Hanoi's position would harden even more. On the other hand it might be possible, using the Soviets as message bearing intermediaries, to arrange some form of reciprocal NVN/U.S. restraint with respect to large unit actions before the private talks began. Such restraint could be pitched as a way both major protagonists could evidence their serious intent and mutually improve the climate for serious negotiations. Hanoi might be receptive to such a pitch if it were convinced that the U.S. was indeed prepared to discuss candidly and seriously the shape of South Vietnam's political future and a specific timetable for the withdrawal of all U.S. forces.

Approved For Release 2004/12/02 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000600070017-7

Approved For Release 2004/12/02 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000600070017-7

g. The GVN. Scenario A or any variant thereof would put severe and probably irreparable strains on our relations with the present GVN. There should be no illusions on this score. Our private line with the Saigon government, and to some extent our public position to the world at large, would almost have to be that having labored for more than a decade to help non-Communist South Vietnam get on its feet and having paid the price of more than 40,000 lives, we had done more than our share. From here on, the GVN was going to have to be on its own; for we were opting out of the role of major participant. With a million odd men under arms, the time we had helped to buy, and the resources we had provided, the GVN should be able to, and in any event would simply have to cope with what was in the final analysis its political problem, not ours. There would almost certainly be some sharp public statements emanating from Saigon. Our actions might precipitate a governmental crisis or upheaval. Our gamble would have to be that if the non-Communist political structure collapsed or the Communists came to power, the collapse would not be so soon or the Communists' acquisition of control so swift as to make U.S. actions appear to be the major catalytic factor in any such train of events. This could be one point we might bargain on with Hanoi, but our negotiating leverage would not be great, and it would be hard to enforce Hanoi's compliance with any promises made in this regard.

In sum, under Scenario A we could probably effect an almost total U.S. disengagement within a six to twelve month time frame, but the trade off would almost inevitably be an Indochina shaped politically very much in accord with Hanoi's desires.

SCENARIO B -- SUBSTANTIVE OBJECTIVES THE CONSTANTS

13. If we assume that our primary objectives -- the constants -- are those that relate to the future political structure of South Vietnam, or at least to having that structure reflect a fair balance of internal South Vietnamese political forces, then the following mix and sequence of actions probably stands the best chance for success.

a. Pressure Points. Hanoi is not going to abandon its objectives but, as noted above, our interests do not require this. Our objectives can be achieved if Hanoi can be induced to alter the strategy through which it is now seeking to achieve its objectives, a strategy whose key

Approved For Release 2004/12/02 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000600070017-7

Approved For Release 2004/12/02 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000600070017-7

ingredient is the extensive use of armed force. Hanoi can be induced to change its strategy if it can be led to believe that.

(1) By its calculations (not ours) the costs of of pursuing this strategy are going to outweigh any probable benefits likely to be derived therefrom within any reasonable period of time,

and/or

(2) Its present strategy is producing developments clearly not in Hanoi's long term interests.

The latter is probably a more fruitful pressure point on which to concentrate; for it is one directly touched by our current policy of Vietnamization. The last thing Hanoi wants to have to cope with is a non-Communist South Vietnam capable of carrying on the current struggle indefinitely with U.S. support of a type and level that the U.S. can also (for political, economic or any other reasons) indefinitely sustain. The Politburo resumed armed struggle in 1957 to prevent precisely this from happening. Thus such a development would mean that Hanoi's current strategy was producing that which it had been specifically designed to prevent. The Politburo could not possibly have any stronger inducement than this to change its strategy.

b. The U.S. Posture. Hanoi is counting heavily on domestic political pressures within the United States influencing the U.S. government in the way analogous pressures shaped the policy of French governments in 1953-54. This fact makes the old homily of "less haste, more speed" particularly applicable to the situation in Vietnam. One of the many paradoxes of Indochina is that public manifestations of a U.S. desire to disengage promptly encourage Hanoi to prolong the struggle. Conversely, one of the greatest pressures that could be exerted on Hanoi to move swiftly to settlement would be a credible public stance by the U.S. government that we are prepared to carry on however long is necessary to achieve our political objectives.

Approved For Release 2004/12/02 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000600070017-7

Approved For Release 2004/12/02 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000600070017-7

c. Hanoi's Major Vulnerabilities. Hanoi has three major areas of potential vulnerability: one is a dearth of overt Communist military or political successes. Over the past two odd years, the Politburo has been long on exhortations to greater effort and short on tangible accomplishments capable of lifting the morale of those engaged in the increasingly arduous struggle. (In this sphere, Cambodia holds great promise in Hanoi's eyes as an arena in which to recoup from checks in South Vietnam and even blocks in Laos.) The second is a manpower drain which Hanoi has the raw bodies to offset in the short run but which the Politburo could not but view with profound disquiet if it really thought the struggle might be indefinitely prolonged. The third is a potential supply and logistic problem occasioned by the loss of Sihanoukville and the allied operations in Cambodia. This is a vulnerability Hanoi is moving swiftly to overcome, but which still exists for the time being, particularly since the operations of Communist forces in lower South Vietnam and Cambodia are now totally dependent on logistic support via Laos. An optimum U.S. strategy would concentrate on these three areas of major vulnerability.

d. The Single Struggle. In the past, Hanoi has derived considerable benefit from the fact that it regards the Indochina area as a single struggle and apportions, diverts or adjusts its assets accordingly while the U.S. has regarded events in Laos, or at least North Laos, and more lately Cambodia as distinct from the struggle in South Vietnam. We and our allies could deploy our collective assets more efficiently, and compound Hanoi's problems more effectively if we at least privately adopted Hanoi's outlook.

e. Military Actions

(1) The logistics support network in South Laos and northern Cambodia is now vital to Hanoi's continued effort. One phase of our military endeavor under this scenario should concentrate on the continued aggressive harassment and interdiction of this network with U.S. air power and ground action by at least the South Vietnamese, locally ethnic irregular formations and perhaps the Thais.

(2) In North Laos we should provide air and logistic support to local friendly forces sufficient to move the Communists back across the Plaine des Jarres during

Approved For Release 2004/12/02 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000600070017-7

Approved For Release 2004/12/02 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000600070017-7

by

the current rainy season and block further Communist advances during the next dry season.

(3) In Cambodia, South Vietnamese and Thai troops should be used where necessary to prevent major Communist tactical successes, a crash allied effort should be mounted to train, support and equip the Cambodian army and improve its effectiveness, and U.S. air power should be used wherever feasible to harass Communist forces and support friendly elements combating the Communists on the ground.

(4) In South Vietnam the present scope and scale of allied military activity should not be diminished.

f. Political Actions

(1) In Laos, Souvanna's government should be encouraged to maintain its present policies and given the support necessary to make this possible.

(2) Cambodia is the greatest immediate political problem. The government in Phnom Penh needs advice, moral support and some material assistance but of a kind and nature that enhances its image of patriotic struggle against an alien aggressor and, hence, does not smother it in a foreign embrace. We should quickly develop a small but adequate U.S. mission headed by a competent ambassador familiar with and attuned to the urgent needs of this complex situation. One of the senior Foreign Service Officers who has served effectively as a "Dep Cords" in Vietnam would probably be an optimum choice (e.g., Mr. Charles Whitehouse, Ambassador Koren or even Ambassador Colby). The U.S. Mission in Cambodia should work in closest cooperation with its counterpart missions in Saigon, Vientiane and Bangkok.

(3) In South Vietnam, the major task is to help the GVN defuse incipient political crises and short run problems and get on with the task of assuming a progressively predominant role in the execution of the struggle against Hanoi. The Communists current diversion of attention and effort to Cambodia should

Approved For Release 2004/12/02 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000600070017-7

problems in North Vietnam, (2) lack of Communist achievements, (3) the extent of sacrifices already made to no avail and (4) the fact that such sacrifices will continue so long as the Politburo persists in its present strategy.

j. The Double Track. Basically, the mix of actions outlined above would be designed to produce a situation in which either:

(1) Hanoi shifted strategy and moved to what we would term a serious negotiating stance,

or

(2) There evolved in the Indochina area a regional grouping, with the GVN playing a leading role, capable of containing Hanoi's politico-military threat to the region with the U.S. curtailed to a domestically feasible and decidedly subordinate supporting role, one not involving major participation in actual combat.

In either case the bulk of current U.S. objectives would be achieved. Furthermore, the clear and valid prospect of (2) emerging in some finite time frame would give Hanoi the strongest possible inducement to move to (1).

k. The Odds and the Time Frame. Nothing is ever guaranteeable in Indochina, certainly not Scenario B as outlined above. It has, however, at least an even chance of working and its degree of success, or lack thereof, should begin to be meaningfully measurable in three to four months. Under optimum circumstances it would be unlikely to produce real benefits (i.e., real negotiations or disengagement below a supportable threshold) in less than a year. But if this scenario works at all, its fruits should be readily apparent and demonstrable to any whose minds are not closed to evidence within about two years.

Approved For Release 2004/12/02 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000600070017-7
SECRET/
25X1

Approved For Release 2004/12/02 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000600070017-7

14. Organizational Coda. A central element of the above analysis is that Hanoi regards its political or military activities throughout Indochina as integral component parts of a single struggle, a struggle whose separate aspects Hanoi consciously tries to make reciprocally complementary and mutually reinforcing. If this analysis is accepted as valid, an obvious corollary is that to combat Hanoi efficiently and effectively, the U.S. should also view Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam as component elements of a single struggle and conduct its affairs accordingly.

15. At the moment, the affairs of this government are not being so conducted. A plethora of working level and policy level groups and committees, with much overlapping membership, are grappling with various component parts of the total Indochina problem but in a way that almost precludes effective, efficient address to the total problem. We have, for example, an NSC Vietnam ad hoc subcommittee which specifically avoids considering Laos or Cambodia, a Laos ad hoc committee which does not look at Vietnam, a Vietnam Special Studies Group which is different from both, and various subgroups of all three -- some of which work on overlapping problems (e.g., cease fire, where there has long been a subgroup working on cease fire under Mr. Sullivan's NSC Vietnam subcommittee and there is a VSSG Working Group cease-fire panel, under a different chairman, with overlapping but different membership). One special ad hoc group drafts the response to NSSM-94, another drafts the response to NSSM-95, while the VSSG Working Group, in an organizationally separate exercise (but using some of the same people), drafts a different paper that materially bears on the conclusions of both. Meanwhile, the WSAG, or its working group, ploughs the same, or adjacent, terrain in separate fashion though, again, with some overlapping membership. This whole non-system virtually guarantees duplicate efforts working unintentionally at cross purposes, confusion, wasted energy, missed opportunities, and poor staff work to support decision-making echelons of the government, including the President.

16. It would seem to me that a drastic rationalization and consolidation of this staff support and coordination effort would be of great benefit to the U.S. Government and those who determine its policies, particularly since the latter have every right to expect that the government's full resources will be efficiently marshalled to support and implement their decisions and the present non-system makes this virtually impossible.

17. I would recommend that there be appointed to or within the NSC staff a single senior officer who would serve full time as, in effect, the President's Indochina manager. This officer should probably be subordinate to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs, but should relieve him of detailed concern on Indochina matters and should have access to the President through or with the Assistant for National Security

Approved For Release 2004/12/02 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000600070017-7

Approved For Release 2004/12/02 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000600070017-7

Affairs. This officer, in turn should have a small (three or four) number of NSC Staff officers assisting him on a full time basis plus adequate secretarial support.

18. The Indochina manager should chair an interagency committee whose members (one each from State, Office of the Secretary of Defense, JCS, and CIA) should be of two/three star rank or civilian equivalent. This group should replace the present VSSG Working Group, Vietnam ad hoc Group, Laos ad hoc Group, and all other similar bodies. Its members should have direct access to their respective principals, be cognizant of all of their respective departments' Indochina activities, and be empowered to vote their departments' or agencies' stock on all routine matters.

19. This Indochina Committee should not attempt, on its own, to do substantive analysis or detailed operational planning. Instead, when there is work of such a nature to be done, it should levy the task on the component of government most directly responsible, asking that component to prepare a draft with the participation of and in consultation with other government components. The Indochina Committee -- or its chairman, with the assistance of his small personal staff within the NSC -- should confine itself (or himself) to setting terms of reference for commissioned projects, reviewing the drafts, directing revisions, or assembling completed packages for policy review.

20. The Indochina Committee and its chairman should report to a group consisting of the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs and the Secretaries of State and Defense, the Chairman of the JCS, and the DCI -- with their respective principal deputies as alternate members. This group should be chaired by the President himself, with all principals attending plus any others the President might desire (e.g. the Attorney General), whenever major studies or action recommendations are up for final review.

21. A structure such as that outlined above would minimize duplication and waste motion, enable the U.S. Government to address the Indochina problem as a whole, ensure thorough but prompt staff support for senior decision-making echelons, ensure that the full resources of the Government are brought to bear on Indochina questions or the implementation of Indochina decisions, and materially increase our chances of achieving U.S. objectives in the Indochina struggle.

[redacted] 25X1

George A. Carver, Jr.
Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

GAC:taw
Distribution:
Orig. - Addressee
1 - DCI Special Projects
1 - GAC Chrono
1 - Memos TO and FROM DCI

Approved For Release 2004/12/02 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000600070017-7